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THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN 1964.

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THE ADDRESS SUMMARIZES THE 1964 GENERAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION (MLA), BUT EMPHASIZES THOSE ACTIVITIES FUNDED BY GOVERNMENT CONTRACT OR WITH FOUNDATION SUPPORT. AMONG COMPLETED GOVERNMENT-FUNDED PROJECTS DESCRIBED ARE (1) JUNIOR AND SENIOR COLLEGE MODERN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT SURVEYS, (2) THE PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE MLA COOPERATIVE TESTS BY THE EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE, (3) THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THIRD PARALLEL FORM OF THE PROFICIENCY TESTS, AND (4) THE 1963 CONFERENCE REPORT ON TEACHER PREPARATION ISSUES. CARNEGIE CORPORATION-SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES DETAILED ARE (1) THE CONFERENCE THAT PRODUCED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM STANDARDS, (2) STAFF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS DOCUMENT, THE MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE PROFICIENCY TESTS, AND THE UPGRADING OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS, (3) THE VIGOR OF THE CONSULTANTS' PANEL, AND (4) THE FUNCTION OF THE MATERIALS AND PUBLICATION CENTER. MENTIONED ALSO ARE "CONTINUING SPANISH," THE REVISION OF "MODERN SPANISH," THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING MANUAL, AND THE PROJECTED AUTHORSHIP OF A BASIC PORTUGUESE TEXT. REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE INITIATION OF AN OFFICIAL ENGLISH PROGRAM, TO THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY, AND TO THE ASPIRATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS. STATISTICAL DATA ARE CITED IN SUPPORT OF ENROLLMENT TREND OBSERVATIONS. THIS DOCUMENT IS A REPRINT FROM "PMLA," VOLUME 80, NUMBER 2, MAY 1965, PAGES 29-32, AND WAS DELIVERED AS AN ADDRESS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK CITY, DECEMBER 29, 1964. (AB)

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THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN 1964*

By Donald D. Walsh, *Director of the Foreign Language Program*

OUR MAJOR activities this year, as in each of the past five years, have been undertaken either with foundation support or through contracts with the United States Office of Education under the National Defense Education Act. In February John Harmon became Director of the Materials Center, changing places with Glen Willbern, who became Director of Research. Under Mr. Willbern's direction and through a government contract we have just completed a survey of modern-foreign-language enrollments in junior and senior colleges as of the fall of 1963. We are currently negotiating several contracts through Title VI of the National Defense Education Act. The first is to gather statistics on offerings and enrollments in all foreign languages in public and non-public secondary schools. The second is to make a survey of current college enrollments in all foreign languages. Since gathering statistics on the classical languages is not a justifiable expenditure of national defense funds, the Modern Language Association will pay out of its own funds the proportion of the total cost needed to gather the facts on Latin and Greek in schools and colleges.

A third contract will update and give perspective to our series of surveys of foreign-language entrance and degree requirements for the bachelor's and master's degree and for the Ph.D. With your cooperation we hope to learn a good deal more than we presently know about the use of placement and proficiency tests and about how helpful they are in easing the transition from school to college.

A fourth contract will give us histories of the teaching of Italian, Portuguese, and Russian in the United States. For each language a first draft history will be written and criticized by several authorities in the hope of producing definitive histories comparable to those already produced under MLA auspices and government support by Edwin Zeydel for German, by Sturgis Leavitt for Spanish, and by George Watts for French. The new histories will be written by Joseph Fucilla for Italian, by Glen Willbern for Portuguese, and by Albert Parry for Russian.

Our fifth project is a lexical count of spoken Spanish that we hope will be comparable to the French count by Mauger and Gougenheim and the German count by Alan Pfeffer. The Spanish project, which will be directed by Eugenio Chang-Rodríguez of Queens College, is more complicated because of the differences between Peninsular and American Spanish and because of the varieties within American Spanish. But it will be very interesting to see how much uniformity, how much universal Spanish there is. I suspect that lexicographers have concentrated undue attention on the divergencies.

The sixth contract will be an evaluation of the 1965 National Defense Language Institutes. We first undertook to supervise these evaluations in 1963. In 1964, in order to widen our basis of criticism of the institutes, we added to our team of teacher evaluators a dozen administrators, superintendents of schools, a professor of education, a dean, a chief state school officer. None of these was a foreign-language expert, and their reaction to the institute experience was fresh and somewhat surprising. These were representatives of the educational establishment, and their background might incline them to view dimly the NDEA and its categorical aid to foreign-language instruction. But they were rhapsodically enthusiastic about what they saw. Even though some of the foreign-language evaluators favored a gradual phasing out of the Institute program, the administrators recommended that the program be expanded and extended indefinitely.

This has been a year of progress in testing. The MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests, produced under the direction of Nelson Brooks and under contract with the U. S. Office of Education, have been published and are available through the Cooperative Test Division of Educational Testing Service. The tests are accompanied by teachers' manuals and other interpretive materials. A kit is now in preparation that will show teachers how to use the tests to evaluate their programs and the achievement of their students.

Under the direction of Wilmarth Starr, MLA Director of Testing since 1959, a third form of the MLA Foreign Language Proficiency Tests for Teachers and Advanced Students in French, German, Russian, and Spanish has been prepared, again under contract

* An address given at the General Meeting on the Foreign Language Program in New York, 29 December 1964.

with the U. S. Office of Education. This set of tests is parallel to the two existing forms in the four skills and in language analysis. It is comparable to them in Culture and in Professional Preparation. The new tests will enable us to remove the tight security of the Form A set of tests, so that they can be scored locally by colleges and universities that wish to administer them on campus for September placement. Some institutions are already using the MLA Cooperative Tests for this purpose. It should be remembered that the Cooperative Tests are usable from grade 7 through grade 14, or the sophomore year in college.

Because of his major administrative responsibilities to New York University, Bill Starr has had to step down as MLA Director of Testing. He will continue with us as a consultant, but the present Director of Testing is Joseph Astman. He is this year dividing his time between the MLA and Hofstra University, where he is Chairman of Foreign Languages. Professor Astman's task will be to inform the profession about the uses of the Proficiency Tests, to interpret the scores, to work out a scale for equating the scores with the various levels of proficiency described in the MLA Statement of Qualifications for Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages, and finally to supervise the production of three new batteries of tests, Forms D, E, and F.

All the activities of which I have spoken so far have been or are being carried out under contract with the U. S. Office of Education. Another government-supported activity was a conference held in 1963 under the chairmanship of Archibald MacAllister of Princeton. It concerned itself with the preparation of college teachers of modern foreign languages. The report of the conference, published in the May 1964 issue of *PMLA*, has had some impact in this crucial area of teacher preparation. The Carnegie Corporation, deeply interested in this area, especially through the surveys and studies of Mr. Conant, has been generous in support of MLA activity in this field. A year ago a Carnegie-supported conference produced a document, "Standards for Teacher-Education Programs in Modern Foreign Languages." And in February of this year we added to the FL Program staff, with Carnegie support, André Paquette, formerly state FL supervisor in New Hampshire. He is trying to implement the Standards document and to increase and improve the use of the MLA Proficiency Tests as an element in approved programs for the preparation of teachers of modern foreign languages and as an instrument for state certification by examination. Mr. Paquette has spoken at several meetings of teachers and certifying officers. He has arranged five meetings of state directors of teacher education and certification with foreign language teachers in conjunction with the annual meetings of the regional MLAs and the Northeast Conference. We hope that out of these discussions will come a revised statement of standards acceptable to our profession. We hope it will also be acceptable to and officially accepted by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification.

Among our other efforts to improve the quality of teacher preparation, again under the direction of André Paquette, were two conferences this fall. One was attended by members of graduate departments directly concerned with the training of the teaching assistant. The other was attended by teachers of methods courses for the future high-school teacher. Out of these two conferences will come what we hope will be authoritative descriptions of the content of ideal courses in this area.

The MLA panel of consultants, supported by Carnegie funds, continues to grow in size and vigor. With the cooperation of state departments of education and their foreign-language supervisors, we are ready to send MLA members to communites and schools that need expert advice on any matter concerned with language learning. From our panel of 216 members in forty-two states and the District of Columbia, there have been nearly two hundred calls for such consultations this year.

Under the bustling energy of John Harmon the Materials and Publication Center is a hive of activity. Publishers and producers have generously filled the Center's shelves with the latest texts, tapes, films, and other teaching aids. An increasing number of teachers are using the Center for research and as an aid in selection of materials. Two brochures, one listing available publications in English and one in foreign languages, have been distributed to nearly a hundred thousand teachers, supervisors, counsellors, and libraries throughout the country. The publications staff is manfully coping with the resultant flow of orders for our materials. They currently amount to nine hundred orders a month. The first of the Supplements to the 1962 *MLA Selective List of Materials*, devoted to materials in French and Italian, has just been published. Many of you

doubtless saw it at the MLA Booth in the Exhibit Area.

The last of our Carnegie-supported activities you have already heard about from John Diekhoff, and I shall not anti his climax.

Support from another foundation, Rockefeller, resulted in the publication in 1960 of *Modern Spanish*, a college textbook written by a team of six writers under the chairmanship of Dwight Bolinger. The team and its advisory council received no royalties from what turned out to be a best seller. The royalties are in an MLA revolving fund which is to be used for similar pioneering activity. The principal activity this year has been *Continuing Spanish*, a second-year college text produced by a team of writers under the chairmanship of Lawrence Poston. The first of the two volumes of the manuscript is in the hands of the publisher, American Book Company. We hope for publication in about a year. Another major activity has been the revision of *Modern Spanish*, undertaken by Hugo Montero on leave from San Francisco State College. He is working on the revision in Cambridge under the guidance of Dwight Bolinger and Joan Ciruti. Among other current projects are a manual on the teaching of English as a second language, a basic text in Portuguese that would parallel *Modern Spanish*, and a film, based on a unit in *Modern Spanish*, that would illustrate modern techniques in language teaching.

We foreign-language teachers need to be reminded periodically that the Modern Language Association is not the Modern *Foreign* Language Association. English is a modern language, and more than half the members of the MLA are teachers of English. We should therefore be happy to know that the MLA now has an official English Program, to correspond to its FL Program. Frederick L. Gwynn, on leave from Trinity College, is its Director, and one of his most urgent tasks is to help the Institute Branch of the U. S. Office of Education get ready for the ninety English Institutes that may possibly be set up this summer under authorization of the latest revision of the National Defense Education Act.

A lot of money and a lot of effort have gone into the improvement of the conditions for language learning in this country. Has it been worth the money and the effort? Were the goals valid? And to what extent have we reached them? One of the goals was certainly to aim for a control of all the language skills, not just reading and writing, and certainly not just two-way translation. We have made some progress toward this goal, as is evidenced by new teaching materials, new tests, and NDEA Institutes. But we must be wary lest the emphasis on listening and speaking imply the neglect or unreasonable postponement of our concern with the other two skills. We still have a lot to learn about how to teach reading and writing. And we must not lose sight of the obvious, that without these skills the student has made only limited and haphazard contact with the foreign culture and its literature.

Another goal has been an extension of the language sequence. It must be extended downward and upward, downward into the elementary grades, upward into levels V and VI in school and on into college courses. The story of the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary schools has some glorious pages and some rather tragic ones. With gifted specialist teachers in the classroom, or with televised master teachers and conscientious follow-up by dedicated classroom teachers, superior language learning can and does occur. It occurs especially if the whole school system views the learning with interest and sympathy, and it occurs especially if the FLES sequence is part of a continuing sequence throughout the grades. We do not want to have early beginnings of language study followed by early endings. A grade III to VI sequence is not our goal. Wherever the sequence begins (and the earlier the better), the terminus in school should be grade XII. This terminus, of course, is for the minority who do not go on to college. As I'm sure you know, the population explosion has become collegiate, and undergraduate foreign language enrollments are keeping pace with it. But they are no longer significantly exceeding the general rate of growth. Two MLA surveys show that between 1960 and 1963 the college population increased 30 per cent and the enrollments in modern foreign languages increased 31 percent, from 608 thousand to 801 thousand. But enrollments in graduate courses in this three-year period rose from 18 thousand to 32 thousand, almost double the undergraduate rate of increase. This is a healthy sign for our supply of teachers. It is also indicative of a general trend, which we have noted in *PMLA*, toward increased college enrollments in *intermediate* and *advanced* courses while enrollments in *beginning* courses in the most popular languages (French, German, Spanish) have stood still or declined. This does not mean, of course, that college teachers of lan-

guage and literature can stop teaching language entirely and concentrate on literature. There will always be many undergraduates who will want to start the study of a new language. In the past, starting a new language in college has often meant a preference for the unknown evil as opposed to the known evil. We are optimistic enough to think that now and in the future a new language begun in college may not be a desperate switch but an enlargement of the learner's language experience. Freeman Twaddell reports that of sixty-six students in beginning German at Brown this fall, one had studied no foreign language in school, twenty-nine had studied one other language, thirty-two had studied two others, and four had studied *three* others. We can henceforth with some justification anticipate more experienced and more sophisticated students in our beginning language classes in college, and we may hope that the materials and the teaching will be correspondingly sophisticated.

Early in the spring Howard Nostrand wrote us about the sharp increase in intermediate as opposed to elementary foreign-language enrollments at the University of Washington. Soon after this Bill Parker wrote from Indiana that intermediate and advanced enrollments in French had soared and wondered if this were a trend. We enquired around and published some early figures in *PMLA*. More figures were volunteered by other language departments. Here are some of them, chosen at random: at the University of Washington, between 1959 and 1963, intermediate Spanish enrollments increased fivefold and intermediate French sixfold. At Indiana, second-year French went from 79 to 168 in a single year; between 1959 and 1963 second-year Spanish composition and conversation went from 126 to 293 and second-year literature from 151 to 259. At Pennsylvania, between 1959 and 1963, German I declined, German II improved, and Advanced German almost doubled. At Missouri, between 1961 and 1963, French I declined and all the other levels nearly doubled. At Michigan, between 1959 and 1963, enrollments in upper-class language courses (four high-school units) increased 70% in French and 55% in Spanish. At Utah State University, between 1959 and 1963, French enrollments in lower-division courses went up 45%, in upper-division courses, 142%; the corresponding percentages for German were 13 and 217, for Spanish, 51 and 285. At Yale, in a five-year period, enrollments in first- and second-year German have dropped, but third- and fourth-year enrollments have more than doubled. Now of course not all these increased upper-class enrollees are freshmen entering with three or four credits in a language. Some of them are students whose college contacts with the language were happy enough to make them want to go on studying it. But an encouraging portion of the college students taking advanced courses in foreign languages are building on a sound and solid foundation of language learning in school. And for whatever reason, an increasing number of language students in college—and even in school—are reaching the stage where they don't just study the language, they study *in* the language. What they study is normally literature and culture, but we hear of college courses in European or world history being taught in French, German, Russian, and Spanish, or world geography taught in Spanish in a California high school, and of Elbert Covell College, part of the University of the Pacific, where all the courses, from Algebra to Zoology, are taught in Spanish. These new ventures in the functional use of language strengthen our conviction that the only tenable foreign-language requirement for graduation from a liberal-arts college is a content course at the college level conducted entirely in the language and open only to students with demonstrated proficiency in the four language skills.

The Foreign Language Program was publicly announced twelve years ago at the 1952 MLA Meeting in Boston, the first of these FL Program General Meetings. I was a speaker at that meeting and I have been closely associated with the Program ever since, as Associate Director, then as a member of the Steering Committee, and then as Director. This is my sixth report to you as Director of the Program. I hope it will be the last that I shall make, although I look forward to hearing a good many more. I have asked John Fisher and the MLA Executive Council to appoint a new Director for the Program. The FL Program is a many-ringed circus that I find fascinating. But from now on I should like to view it as a sideline—maybe a ringside—spectator instead of as the performer in the center of all the rings.